

# **Strengthening Subject-specific Pedagogy in a Small-College Setting**



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# Standard 8B

- A potentially vulnerable point for many of us?
- Green cohort: Prediction as of March 2009
- Not traditional orientation of department
- An on-going project! Strengthening!
- Fulfillment of 8B throughout Program as a whole

# Program's Institutional Context



- Undergraduate college of 1350 students
- Multiple Subject & Single Subject Programs
- 3 full-time faculty (2 new as of 9/09)

# Mission Statement

*Westmont's Department of Education provides a supportive collegial community in which to acquire a rigorous, practical, and professional preparation for K-12 teaching. Building on teacher-candidates' liberal arts education, our program is designed to develop exemplary instructional skills, habits of reflection, and moral and cultural sensitivities that promote lifelong learning of diverse students.*

**Overall orientation:**

**A “practical pragmatism” (Larry Cuban)**

## Context, continued

- **Between 1998 and 2009: average of 3 SS credentials awarded annually (Past 3 years, average of 5; and trajectory of growth)**
- **Subject areas: English, History-SS, Math, Art, Physical Education, Science**
- **Approval to offer Music (2010)**

## And some final context

- Cohort model (September entry)
- Four or five-year option (majority 5)
- No waivers: all students qualify on basis of CSET
- Typically 4-5 pre-requisite courses completed prior to academic year in which credential awarded
- Most students continuing from Westmont; do accept candidates prepared in subject-area elsewhere

**Coursework especially pertinent to Standard 8B  
(see also Handout on Organization of all coursework)**

<b>Prior to fall term</b>	<b>ED 101: Explorations (4)</b>
<b>Fall Term</b>	<b>ED 121: Content-area Pedagogy (4) ED 171: Content-area Literacy (4)</b>
<b>January</b>	<b>ED 151: Curric &amp; Instruct: Secondary School (2)</b>
<b>Spring Term</b>	<b>ED 191: Student Teaching (12) ED 196: Seminar (3)</b>

# Factors to which candidates & alumni attribute success: #1

## 1) Field work—

- Semester long student teaching
- Full-time, focused student teaching
- Selection of mentors
- Continuity of relationship with professors in role of supervisor



# Opportunities for mentoring in field

<b>Term</b>	<b>Course</b>	<b>Formal and Informal Mentors in the content area</b>
<b>Exploratory elective Prior to program</b>	<b>1-unit "Windows" course</b>	<b>E-mentor</b>
<b>Prior to program</b>	<b>Explorations in Teaching</b>	<b>40-hour field placement</b>
<b>Fall Semester</b>	<b>Combined placement linked to Content-area Pedagogy &amp; Content-area Literacy</b>	<b>30 hour field placement</b>
<b>January Session</b>	<b>Secondary Curriculum &amp; Instruction</b>	<b>4 class field trips/guest talks/observations representing different content areas</b>
<b>Spring Semester</b>	<b>Full-time student teaching</b>	<b>At least two cooperating teachers for a 5-month long placement</b>

# Factors to which candidates & alumni attribute success: #2

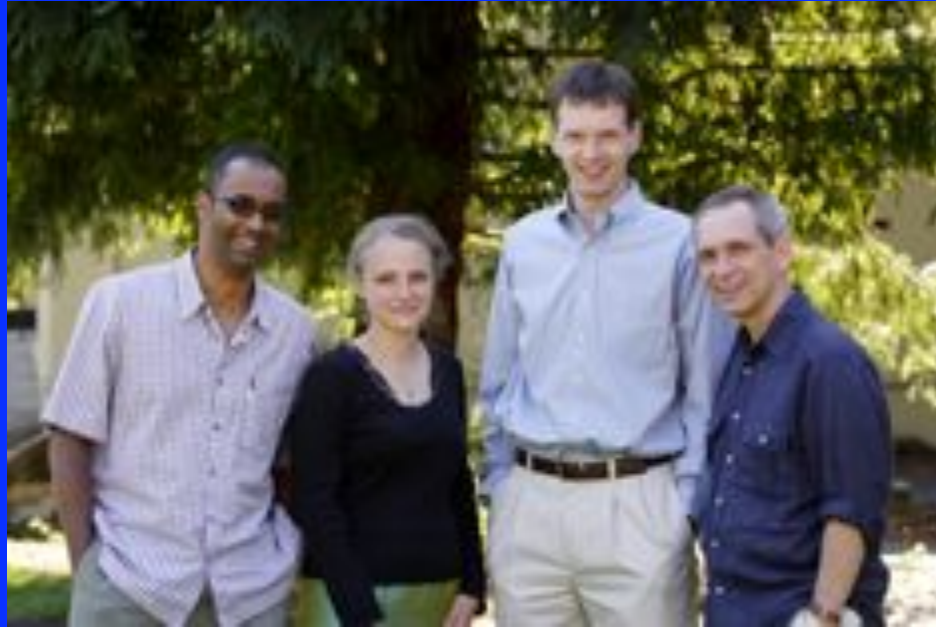
- **Peer Teaching—getting comfortable with self in Teacher Persona**
- **Learning from modeling and counter-modeling of their peers**



# Peer Teaching assignments

<b>Term</b>	<b>Course</b>	<b>Selected teaching presentations</b>
<b>Prior to program</b>	<b>Explorations in Teaching</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1 major presentation to peers (not necessarily in the content area)</li></ul>
<b>Fall semester</b>	<b>Content-area Pedagogy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Minimum of 2 whole-group lessons in field, in addition to required small-group and 1-on-1 instruction.</li><li>• Peer teaching lesson (30 minute; videotaped) from mini-unit</li></ul>
<b>Fall semester</b>	<b>Content-area Literacy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 20 brief presentations (10 minutes) modeling instructional strategies appropriate for content-area</li></ul>

# Factors to which candidates & alumni attribute success: #3



**Modeling of professors in content area—  
in this case Westmont's History faculty**

# Content-area Professors as Models

*Well, they know I'm going into **teaching...it's** something we talk about.*

*From Dr. Mallampalli's example I've been inspired to talk about my own experience and travel...Like my kids are so excited when I show pictures from being in Europe.*



*Dr. Pointer in Recent American History modeled using lots and lots of different resources. Like he brought a whole stack of old Vanity Fair magazines from the library, and we learned about fashions during the 1920s.*

*Dr. Robins really emphasized the research and writing process, and that's helped me in teaching literacy strategies in history, and*

*Dr. Chapman tells stories, and brings us into history through stories....*

*So I use all of their different methods---they all modeled different parts of what's involved in teaching history.*

**Extract from “*Ten Things You and Your Department Can Do to Support Future Secondary Teachers*”**

8. *Deliberately and systematically (and PUBLICLY) reflect on the influence of K-12 teachers on your own intellectual and disciplinary development, and use positive examples from your own K-12 teachers (and/or your own K-12 development) in explaining concepts in your own teaching.*
9. *Get better acquainted with local teachers in general, especially in your disciplinary area—teachers at your church, the teachers of your own children and extended family, and so forth. Brainstorm ways to extend those relationships, through visits to Westmont (see #6), your own visits to a high school classroom, or creative ideas of your own.*

## Require more systematic/ intentional reflection?

- One possible assignment—Activate candidates' awareness of SSP strategies and skills, through written assignment on content-area professors as models and/or counter-models?

# Specific assignments deliberately focused on building SSP skills

- Not necessarily raised by alumni & candidates, at least initially; or in some cases, unless prompted



# Specific assignments deliberately focused on building SSP skills—I of II

Term	Course	Selected Subject-Specific Assignments
Prior to program	Explorations in Teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify subject-specific teaching strategies as part of 40-hour aide/observation work</li><li>• Interview teacher</li></ul>
Fall semester	Content-area Pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Paper on content-area teaching philosophy</li><li>• Unit plan for minimum of 2 weeks of instruction; and an addl. mini-unit</li><li>• Interview teacher, including subject-specific teaching strategies.</li><li>• Written reflection on content standards and academic frameworks</li><li>• Report on subject-specific web-sites and available resources.</li><li>• Report on 3-related articles from content-specific professional journals.</li></ul>

# Specific assignments deliberately focused on building SSP skills—II of II

Term	Course	Selected Subject-Specific Assignments
Fall semester	Content-area Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Analyze content standards pertinent to literacy and write on the role of literacy within the content area</li><li>• Compile content-specific instructional strategies resource binder.</li></ul>
January Session	Secondary Curriculum & Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Join professional association &amp; subscribe to discipline-appropriate professional journal</li><li>• Summarize and present professional article in content-area</li><li>• Prepare syllabi for courses to be taught during student teaching</li></ul>
Spring	Full-time student teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Among other responsibilities, full teaching responsibility for <u>school's</u> entire semester for three classes daily</li><li>• Portfolio documenting fulfillment of TPEs</li></ul>

# Toward more systematic documentation

- Holistic assessments from cooperating teachers & alumni don't suggest there's a problem with substance of our candidates' & graduates' achievement, including fulfillment of 8B
- However—Reflecting on treatment of 8b in our most recent program document: Opportunity to learn documented more thoroughly than demonstration of that learning.
- One next step, then: more systematically documenting the fine print of candidate's achievement

# An exercise with the 8B History- Soc Sci standards

- Extracts from Essay #1 in recent candidate portfolio. See Handouts:
- Sample:....*I have worked hard at trying to make history relatable to the students. One way I have done this is by making connections between history and their lives today. For instance, when I was covering the Japanese Attack on Pearl Harbor, I related the response of many Americans to join World War Two to the American response to the terrorist attacks of 9/11 to go to war in Afghanistan and Iraq. By relating the content to today, it provides a base for students to understand the content and also an aid to help them remember Pearl Harbor....*

# One more sample

*...Because a majority of my students are English Language Learners, most of them learn much more visually than they do simply listening to a teacher explain history. I choose my pictures carefully in order to catch my students' attention. This is evident in my PowerPoint of the Civil Rights movement. I used pictures of Emmett Till's open casket funeral to shock students into the injustices of racism in the South. I also used specific pictures of MLK Jr., Malcolm X, and Stokely Carmichael which show that all three were powerful speakers. In addition to the pictures, I kept the PowerPoint black and white to symbolize the civil rights struggle against blacks and whites.*

# What a hypothetical completed form might look like

- See Handout

Candidate self-assessment (Hypothetical example)  
ED 121

## Teaching History-Social Science in a Single Subject Assignment

*As a candidate for a Single Subject Teaching Credential in History-Social Science, I have*

Subject-specific teaching skill or habit of mind	Explanation of how this SSPS has been notably demonstrated, with reference to each case to specific artifacts, including lesson or unit plans, student work artifacts, and/or classroom observations from assignments
1) Demonstrated the ability to teach the state-adopted academic content standards for students in history-social science (7.12).	Evaluations from supervisors attest to teaching ability. All lessons and unit plans reference state-adopted content standards.
2) Enabled students to learn and use analytic thinking skills in history and social science while attaining the state-adopted academic content standards for students.	Used variety of graphic organizers focusing on thinking skills of prioritizing, classifying, cause-effect relationships. See Domain 1—Artifact #1—Unit on World War I—for sample graphic organizers.
3) Used timelines and maps to reinforce students' sense of temporal and spatial scale.	See student work-samples of timelines and maps created by students. Essay Domain 1—Artifact #3—Student work sampler from immigration unit. Photographs from classroom also—Domain 1—Artifact #2.
4) Taught students how social science concepts and themes provide insights into historical periods and cultures.	Economic concepts introduced during Middle Ages Unit (section on Rise of Trade), including surplus, profit, conditions that allow trade, benefits of trade, Gender roles and class hierarchy also discussed during this same unit with role playing and visuals. Domain 1—Artifact #6—Middle Ages Lesson Plans.
5) Helped students understand events and periods from multiple perspectives by using simulations, case studies, cultural artifacts, works of art and literature, cooperative projects and student research activities.	Perspective exercise on Joan of Arc from French and British points of view (TPE 1—Artifact 3). All of these kinds of activities with the possible exception of "case studies" are explicitly referenced in Domain 1—Artifact #1—Unit on World War I.
6) Connected essential facts and information to broad themes, concepts and principles, and related history-social science content to current or future issues.	Numerous lessons in multiple classes reference current events—some documented in lesson plans and others documented in Supervisor's Written Comments. See Domain 1—Artifact #6—Classroom Observation Notes from March 4.
7) Taught students how cultural perspectives inform and influence understandings of history.	This outcome is diffused throughout my student teaching a core part of my teaching philosophy (Domain 1—Artifact #6—Philosophy of Teaching History), and implicit in numerous artifacts (see #3, above; #11, below). One example from WW II unit attempts to get inside the Germans' point of view to try and understand why they could possibly be attracted to someone like Hitler as a leader. Domain 1—Artifact #1—World War II unit.
8) Selected and used age-appropriate primary and secondary documents and artifacts to help students understand a historical period, event, region or culture.	All units and a majority of lessons during student teaching have included at least some primary sources, in the form of photographic, speeches, and extracts from journals. See Civil Rights Unit, contrasting speeches—Domain 1—Artifact #9—Lesson plans with resources highlighted.
9) Asked questions and structured academic instruction to help students recognize prejudices and stereotypes.	This is implicit or even explicit in much of my teaching, and is discussed in Philosophy of Teaching History essay (Domain 1, Artifact #6). See #11, in connection with stereotypes of Muslims and stereotypes of Arab-Americans.
10) Created classroom environments that support the discussion of sensitive issues (e.g., social, cultural, religious, race and gender issues), and encourage students to reflect on and share their thoughts and values.	Evaluations from college supervisor and from both cooperating teachers document the safe atmosphere I helped to create and sustain. I was specifically commended for sensitive handling of potentially inflammatory comments from students on gender and ethnic diversity issues. Domain 1—Artifact #10 (supervisor's notes from April 10) and #11 (cooperating teacher's mid-term evaluation—comments).
11) Designed activities to illustrate multiple viewpoints on issues.	See #5, above, Domain 1, Artifact #3. During current events discussions, talked about how American Muslims and others in the Arab American community might feel ever since 9/11. Attempted to secure guest speaker from UCSB Arab-American Alliance. (Domain 1, Artifact #7, Invitation).
12) Monitored the progress of students as they work to understand, debate, and critically analyze social science issues, data, and research conclusions from multiple perspectives.	Progress-monitoring and assessment strategies, including rubrics used for debate and research assignments, are included under Domain 2—multiple artifacts.

# Convincing to a Review Team?

- Assuming you had access to candidate e-portfolios so as to be able to access quickly and easily the identified artifacts; and assuming that artifacts indeed reveal a depth and rigor in execution, would you be convinced? What more would you want to see?

# Other possible future steps

- 1) Adding 10 hours to Fall Field Experience, so as to allow requiring additional structured Interviews and Observations with 2-3 identified local Subject-Area Super Stars?
- 2) Require use of teachers' editions of textbooks during Fall Semester, to gain familiarity.
- 3) More systematic use of Subject-Area Practitioners in Content-Area Pedagogy course?
- 4) Requiring attendance at subject-specific professional conference?